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COVID-19 SLAMS BRAKES ON XI JINPING'S PET INITIATIVE

Most projects under the multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are either on hold or getting minimal works

AT LEAST 60% PROJECTS BADLY AFFECTED

About 20% of the projects have been 'seriously' affected, a senior Chinese foreign ministry official said. Another 40% are 'adversely' affected, while a further 30-40% are 'somewhat' affected. The BRI, that aims to link parts of Asia with Europe and Africa through a network of land and sea-based trade routes, is China's attempt to spread its influence abroad| P9

CHINA-PAK CORRIDOR TOO HIT BY DELAYS

- The projects disrupted include the $60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir
- The BRI, mostly funded by borrowed Chinese money, has trapped many countries in debt. Some of the projects were already on hold prior to Covid outbreak due to the mounting debt burden

2,951

PROJECTS COSTING $3.87 TRILLION ARE PLANNED UNDER BRI

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

CORONAVIRUS-POSITIVE CASES CROSSED 10 MILLION GLOBALLY ON SUNDAY • 2,03,051 ACTIVE CASES REPORTED IN INDIA | P9

Now, China psy-ops with 20 martial arts trainers

Claims to have posted them in Lhasa; it's an indirect admission of its troops' inferior skills in hand-to-hand combat, feel experts

MAYANK SINGH @New Delhi

AMID continuing Sino-Indian tensions along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh, China on Saturday announced it has posted 20 martial arts trainers in Tibet's capital Lhasa. Experts see it as part of China's mind games as also an acknowledgement of the deficiency of its troops in hand-to-hand combat at high altitudes.

"Their losses in the physical fights in Galwan and before that at Finger 4 have compelled them to identify and send martial arts trainers," an Army officer said, adding that the announcement was part of China's psychological ops. "The answer lies in the move getting announced after so many days of the deadly clash of June 15," the officer said.

He was referring to the brutal clashes at Patrolling Point 14 on June 15 in which both sides suffered casualties. While India made public the loss of its 20 soldiers, including the local commanding officer, China hasn't revealed its fatalities yet. Hand-to-hand combat also took place on the intervening night of May 5 and 6, after which the Chinese troops began their stand-off. The two armies also clashed on May 14 and May 31, sources revealed.

The 1996 agreement between the two countries prevents the use of guns within 2 km of the LAC.

Infantry units in the Indian Army have soldiers in large numbers trained in the art of unarmed combat (UAC). Each infantry unit has a team for special tasks, called the Ghatak Platoon. It comprises the fittest soldiers in the unit who take a commando course, where they learn the intricacies of unarmed combat.

"It is compulsory for every officer of the infantry and a large number of soldiers to complete 43 days of gruelling training at Commando School in Belagavi, Karnataka," the officer said. "Training goes without a break with a week-long capsule of UAC, which is compulsory to clear before one is declared successful in training."

The Ghatak Platoon inducts a select few new soldiers and young officers every year. Those who are replaced also stay with the unit fulfilling other requirements. As such, every unit has a large number of soldiers trained in the basics of unarmed combat.

The Indian Army also has a large number of regiments with troops from mountain states, thus giving them an edge during operations in a mountainous area like Ladakh.

In fact, Ladakh has its own regiment, the Ladakh Scouts, which comprises youth drawn from the region. They are fully competent for battles at high altitude. It is the youngest among the Indian Army regiments.

CONTRIBUTION OF MAJOR CHINESE FIRMS TO INDIA'S COVID RELIEF POOL

While sentiments against Chinese-owned companies have been rising after the border clash at Galwan Valley in Ladakh, almost all major Chinese-owned brands operating in India have contributed in some way to the fight against Covid-19 in the country. A look:

Xiaomi
- ₹15 crore contribution/pledge in all for Covid-19 fight in India
- ₹10 crore towards PM and various state CMs' relief funds
- ₹3 crore raised in partnership with NGO Give India to make hygiene kits available for 20,000 families
- Balance pledged towards protective equipment for doctors

Huawei
- ₹7 crore contributed in total towards PM CARES Fund and six other state govts

TikTok
- ₹100 crore worth equipment donated, including 400,000 hazmat medical protective suits and 200,000 masks
- Acquired with support from the Union Ministry of Textiles and handed over to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- ₹30 crore raised for PM CARES Fund from TikTok users through a quiz

MG Motor (Owned by SAIC Motors)
- ₹2 crore contributed to government hospitals and health institutions in Gurugram and Halol (Vadodara), where the carmaker's facilities are located
- Provided 100 MG HECTOR SUVs to facilitate transport of doctors, medical staff, police and local government officials for community service across the country

Oppo
- ₹1 crore towards PM CARES Fund and UP fund and distributing masks to UP govt

OnePlus
- ₹1 crore towards PM CARES Fund

Vivo
- Contributed 15,000 PPE suits and 50,000 litres of sanitiser to the Central government
- Donated over one lakh medical masks to healthcare workers in Maharashtra

Alibaba Group
- Donated medical and protective equipment to seven Asian countries, including India

Note: Compiled from public announcements made by companies

1,267 new Covid cases shock K'taka; B'luru adds 783

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a massive spike, by far the biggest, a total of 1,267 new Covid-19 cases were added to Karnataka's tally on Sunday, taking the overall count from 11,923 to 13,190 overnight. Bengaluru alone added a record high of 783 cases, pushing up the state's numbers sharply. On Saturday, Bengaluru had accounted for 596 cases.

With the back-to-back surge, Bengaluru now has 3,314 Covid-19 positive cases of which 2,692 are active (currently under treatment). Kalaburagi comes second, but is behind Bengaluru by almost 2,000 cases, at 1,398 positive cases and only 371 active cases, followed by Udupi with 1,179 positive cases and 135 active cases.

The death toll in the state now stands at 207 with 16 more deaths. Of these, four were in Bengaluru, three in Dakshina Kannada, two in Tumakuru and one each in Dharwad, Hassan, Mysuru, Bagalkot, Ballari, Kolar and Kalaburagi. Of the 16 who died, four did not have any co-morbidites and most of them suffered from fever, cough and breathlessness. The death toll in Bengaluru now stands at 88.

Commenting on the deaths, epidemiologist and member of state Covid-19 task force, Dr Giridhara R Babu, in a tweet on Sunday, said, "Bengaluru has the third highest case fatality rate (CFR) in the country, worsening the indicators for Karnataka. The state's CFR is 1.54 per cent and Bengaluru Urban and Rural districts, put together, is 4.85 per cent."

As of now, 243 patients of the 5,472 active cases are in ICU. At least 155 of the ICU patients are in Bengaluru.

With Bengaluru emerging as a hotspot, all attention is now on the city to stop or at least slow down the Covid-19 surge.

CONTINUED ON: P5

Workers arrange beds for patients at the Covid Care Centre set up by the BBMP at the Koramangala Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru on Sunday | SHRIRAMAN

- Bengaluru Urban reports a massive 783 cases in a single day
- 16 patients succumb to disease during the day
- McGann Hospital in Shivamogga to add 150 beds in coming days
- Chitradurga district to conduct door-to-door survey to detect ILI and SARI cases

• FULL COVERAGE P4

Private hospitals, chemists detect 13.5L susceptible individuals in two months

RANJANI MADHAVAN @Bengaluru

IN the two months since the government mandated registered pharmacies and private medical establishments to report cases of people coming in with symptoms of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI), Influenza-Like Illness (ILI), fever, etc., a staggering 1.59 lakh ILI and 5,650 SARI cases were reported by medical establishments till June 25. Also, 11.40 lakh fever cases and 53,460 suspected SARI/ILI cases were reported by pharmacies till June 26.

Between April-end and early May, the State Government issued separate orders directing hospitals/clinics and pharmacies to record details of patients/customers, along with phone numbers, if they show up with the symptoms. This data is to be sent to the government for surveillance and follow-up measures.

So far, 11,623 of the 27,462 (42.32%) medical institutions and 19,050 of the 29,089 chemists/druggists (65.4%) registered under the Karnataka Private Medical Establishments (KPME) Act have responded on the portal.

"Pharmacies and medical establishments which are not reporting SARI/ILI cases to the government are being issued notices and about 12 licences have been cancelled temporarily," said Health and Family Welfare Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Pandey. P5

WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

Pharmacies reported

11,40,243 Fever cases

2,23,056 Cough cases

53,460 SARI/ILI cases

4,64,626 Allergy cases

1,73,289 Fever and allergy cases

73,137 Fever and cough cases

53,048 Allergy and cough cases

38,965 Fever, allergy, cough cases

Pvt medical establishments reported

1,59,028 ILI cases

5,650 SARI cases

2,951 suspected Covid-19 cases

THOSE WHO EYED OUR SOIL GOT A FITTING REPLY: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Mann Ki Baat' address on Sunday said India gave a befitting reply to China in eastern Ladakh, without naming the neighbour. "Those who cast an evil eye on Indian soil in Ladakh have got a befitting response. Our braves made the supreme sacrifice, but did not let adversaries prevail," Modi said. On the Covid-19 front, he urged citizens not to lose their hope. "We must face the challenges and use them to march ahead," he said | P7

Satellite images taken on May 22 (left) and June 23 (right) show the extent of construction at the Galwan Valley within a month, near the border between India and China, known as the Line of Actual Control | AP

Claim I-T exemption on conveyance allowance

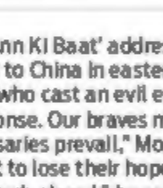
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

THE Central Board of Direct Taxes has notified amendments to Income Tax rules, which allow salaried employees to claim a set of exemptions if they apply for the lower personal income tax regime. This includes exemptions that may be claimed on conveyance allowances extended by employers.

The new regime, which is optional, will be applicable for income earned from financial year 2020-21. A new sub-section has been added to the rule 2BB to implement these exemptions. They include any allowance granted to meet the cost of travel on tour or on transfer; any allowance, granted on tour for the period of journey in connection with a transfer, to meet ordinary daily charges incurred by an employee on account of absence from his/her normal place of duty; and any allowance to meet the expenditure on conveyance in performance of duties, getting to an office, or in employment for profit, provided free conveyance is not provided by the employer.

The notification provides for exemption on transport allowance to physically challenged employees. The exemption limit is set at ₹3,200 per month. However, the Board clarified that while determining the value of perquisites, no exemption will be available in the case of free food and non-alcoholic beverages provided by the employer through paid vouchers.

CONTINUED ON: P10



WHEN THE HUMMINGBIRD FOUND MISING
THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex

STATE UNVEILS NEW NORMS FOR ONLINE EDUCATION

The Karnataka Government has unveiled a new set of temporary guidelines on conducting online classes for school students, which are applicable to every school in the state, from those following state syllabus to CBSE and ICSE. These new norms come after the Karnataka High Court asked the state government to come up with an interim solution till the expert committee on technology-enabled education submits its report. | FULL REPORT: P2

JAL SHAKTI

Karnataka Lake Man's watershed moment –PM's praise

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

THIS shepherd from a remote village in Mandya district has been going about his job of digging ponds quietly on the barren hill near his village to help man and wildlife for four decades now.

Known fondly as 'Pond Man' and 'Lake Man', 84-year-old Kaamegowda became the talk of the town when he was praised for his 'Aatmanirbhar' efforts by none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Mann ki Baat' on Sunday. And coincidentally, a little before that, Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat spoke to him over a video call, amazed by his efforts to harvest 'jal shakti'.

Two years back, *The New Indian Express* wrote about Kaamegowda, who hails from Daasanadoddi village of Malavalli taluk in Mandya district. When TNIE visited his haven then — a half-complete house — the hill presented itself in lush green attire, thanks to the 14 ponds, linked by a waterway that ensures when the upper ponds on the hill are filled, the surplus water flows into the ponds below.

And Kaamegowda received high praise from the highest office of the country for his selfless efforts. Modi, in his 'Mann ki Baat', mentioned Kaamegowda and said that at his age, Gowda was doing a wonderful job. "He might have not done bigger lakes, but constructed 16 ponds for which he has invested his energy and time," said the PM.

The man, who least expects awards or rewards, told TNIE that he was very happy about this. "Someone in Delhi recognised the work of a person from Daasanadoddi. It looks like Modi too is fond of ponds just like me," he said. P3

Kaamegowda stands near one of the ponds he built. The octogenarian has built 16 ponds on the barren Kundinibetta hill in Mandya district | PANDARINATH B